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ABSTRACT

This digest attempts to present the main arguments in favor of early childhood education and care as a high priority area of educational development. The digest also tries to delineate the present "state of the art" of early childhood education and care. The digest has two foci, expressed as two clusters of questions: (1) What does the term "preschool education" mean? Is it different from early childhood care? How can it be seen in its most meaningful relationship to primary education? and (2) Why has there recently been an upsurge of concern about early childhood education and care? Is the upsurge just a flash in the pan or are there weightier considerations in support of the interest, such as the view that preschooling is a critical phase in the development of the human personality? What exactly is the case for preschool education? The digest concludes with recommendations from a number of international and regional seminars held in various parts of the world during the 1970s and early 1980s. These recommendations present a view of the major concerns and principal priorities as perceived by national professionals and also suggest concrete courses of action. (RH)

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The following are the titles in the series of five Digests on Early Childhood Care and Education:

Digest No. I	*Our Future is in Our Children: The Case for Early Childhood Care and Education*
Digest No. II	*Battling Costs for Quality and Quantity: Emerging Responses in Early Childhood Care and Education*
Digest No. III	*Zero throug[illegible] and Growing; Wh[illegible] the Very Young C[illegible]*
Digest No. IV	*Towards an Open Learning Environment for the Young Child: Some Principles, Practices and Issues in Curriculum Planning*
Digest No. V	*Preparing to Help the Young Child Learn and Grow: Training ECCE Personnel*

NOTES, COMMENTS... (CHILD, FAMILY, COMMUNITY)

Digest No. I

Our Future is in our Children : the Case for Early Childhood Care and Education

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UNESCO/UNICEF
CO-OPERATIVE PROGRAMME
UNESCO, PARIS

ED/83/WS/119

Dear Colleague,

The Unit for Co-operation with UNICEF and World Food Programme in the Division of Educational Financing of the Education Sector, Unesco Headquarters, Paris, France, started its series of occasional technical papers in June 1973 and issued, up to the end of 1978, twenty-three numbers. In June 1979, it was replaced by the New Series, which for purposes of easier identification as well as for clearer indication of emphasis, was called "NOTES, COMMENTS... (CHILD, FAMILY, COMMUNITY) NEW SERIES", and subtitled "AIDS TO PROGRAMMING UNICEF ASSISTANCE TO EDUCATION". The New Series represents the response of Unesco to the need which UNICEF staff members as well as their national professional counterparts have felt for technical information on a wide variety of project activities in which UNICEF assistance was sought (examples: Pre-School Education, Innovations in Basic/Primary Education, Non-Formal Education, Primary Health Care, Girls' Education, etc.).

This Digest - Our Future is in our Children - is the first of five Digests based on the 39 issues of the New Series concerned with pre-school education (See Appendix I for an annotated list) and the following two studies:

- *Planning Early Childhood Care and Education in Developing Countries by Alastair Heron, International Institute for Educational Planning, Paris, 1979;*
- *World Survey of Pre-School Education by Gaston Mialaret, Educational Studies and Documents, No. 13, Unesco Paris, 1976.*

It is an attempt essentially to present the main arguments advanced by the authors of the 39 issues in favour of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) as a high priority area of educational development; and to delineate the present 'state of the art', as it were, as ECCE is slowly but surely emerging from the scientific studies and investigations of scholars reported in these papers and studies.

Our grateful thanks go to the authors of these papers and studies for allowing us to use their materials. While references are given to all quotations from published works in the form of footnotes, extracts from "Notes, Comments..." (Child, Family, Community) New Series are identified with numbers relating to references in Appendix II. Needless to add the views and opinions expressed in this Digest are those of the authors of the original documents, or of the author of the Digest, and do not necessarily reflect those of Unesco.

The occasion to digest the issues on pre-school education has arisen from the growing demand of readers for these. A most gratifying feature of the series has been that although originally developed to help programming officers in the field, whether national or those representing UNICEF or Unesco, to design and implement project activities in education relevant to UNICEF's interests and concerns - and this continues to be its primary objective - it is being currently used by many others for different purposes. It is hoped the expanding readership of the documentation prepared by the Unit for Co-operation with UNICEF and WFP will find the Digest as relevant to its needs and of an much practical use as the original issues of the series.

With the publication of the five Digests, the 39 issues of "Notes, Comments.. - New Series", Sub-classification Pre-School Education (Nos. 1-39) will cease to be reprinted other than in special cases where a demand is specifically made by UNICEF colleagues in the field.

As in the past, we shall be glad to receive your comments and suggestions and, above all, your contributions to the series.

Ananda W.P. Guruge
Chief
Unit for Co-operation with
UNICEF and WFP
Education Sector

25 July 1983

N.B. We are most grateful to both the Unesco Phototheque and the Bernard van Leer Foundation for having furnished the photographs featured in the Digest.

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Ignorant
Illegitimate,
Hungry sometimes,
Living in tenement yards
Dying in burial societies
The people is a lumbering giant
That holds history in his hand.

* * * *

And the children grow
Force their way out of the slums into the professions
And stand up in the legislature.

To-day they hope
But to-morrow belongs to the people
To-morrow they will put power behind their brow
And get skill in their hands.

To-morrow
They will make a hammer to smash the slums
And build the schools.

Like a River, the people hold history in their hands
And To-morrow belongs to them.

A.J. Seymour

INTRODUCTION

The Twentieth Century has been truly called the century of the child. Never before have the governments and voluntary bodies alike given greater recognition to the rights and needs of the child or engaged more actively in exploring possibilities to create for him an environment in which the child can grow as a human being to the utmost limits of his potential. But the tasks are daunting and extremely difficult.

Unesco's interest in the education of the pre-school child - as in that of the school-going age, which indeed is in good part the raison d'être of its establishment in 1946 - is as old as the Organization. But a particularly exciting period in this regard has been the 1970s when following the recommendations of the 17th (1972) and subsequent sessions of its General Conference, and in response to the growing interest of the Member States, Unesco has been instrumental, among other things, in drawing, through its varied action programmes, pointed attention to:

- *the overall problems of early childhood care and education,*
- *the indispensability of developing a variety of approaches - formal, non-formal and informal - to the provision of ECCE, and*
- *the special urgency of developing with community support and involvement, effective alternatives to reach children from the deprived sections of the society.*

UNICEF, with its emphasis on the overall development of the child has been a major collaborator with Unesco in its assistance towards promotion of pre-school services in the developing world. This international organization provides over one-third of the total multilateral financial assistance that goes to educational development in the Third World. With the adoption of the "Basic Services Approach" in 1975, Unicef's activ-

ities now encompass a wide range of social development efforts in maternal and child health, nutrition, water supply, education and supporting services for women.

This digest has two foci:

(1) What does the term 'pre-school education' mean? Is it different from (in particular, does it or does it not comprehend) early childhood care? How to see it in its most meaningful relationship to primary education?

(2) Why this recent upsurge of concern about ECCE? Is it just a flash in the pan, or are there weightier considerations in support of the interest - such as that pre-schooling is a critical phase in the development of the human personality? To be more direct what exactly is the case for pre-school education?

The recommendations of a series of international and regional seminars, which provide a bird's eye view of the major concerns and the principal priorities as perceived by national professionals constitute the closing part of the digest.

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FOCUS I: Meaning and Scope of Pre-school Education

The issue of age

'Pre-school' as a prefix (for age) in terms such as 'pre-school education', 'pre-school child', and 'pre-school teacher' refers to any age before the compulsory age of entry to a primary school.

As a child's education really begins at birth, the term 'pre-school child' can thus refer to any child, however young, provided he has not attained the compulsory age of entry to a primary school. It could, for instance, refer to a child of any age before the age of 5 as in some countries where the age of compulsory education is 5, to a child before the age of 6 as in some others, and to a child before the age of 7 in still others where the age of entry to a primary school is 7.

Pre-school education may, therefore, be defined as all education that a child experiences or goes through from the time he is born to the time he begins formal school. This period will normally range from five to seven years. The educational forces which impinge upon the child before he enters formal school are many, but these broadly emanate from three sources: the HOME, the COMMUNITY and the PRE-SCHOOL INSTITUTION. All three are partners in pre-school education.

The exact wording of the objectives of pre-school education may differ from one country to another, but these will generally encompass:

(a) providing a child with an informal education geared towards developing the child's mental capabilities and his physical growth;

(b) helping a child to enjoy living and learning through

play;

(c) helping a child to build good habits for effective living as an individual and as a member of the society;

(d) helping the child to appreciate his cultural background and customs;

(e) encouraging spiritual and moral growth of the child;

(f) developing a child's imagination, self-reliance and thinking skills;

(g) enriching the child's experiences to enable him to cope with school life;

*(h) establishing a link between pre-school and primary education.**

The purpose of pre-school education like the overall purpose of all education should be seen as *providing for the all-round development of the child's personality by complementing and extending the pattern of informal education that is being provided in the domestic setting.* Sometimes "this 'complementing and extending' will also involve a 'compensatory intention' if the rapidly-developing young child is to receive overall a pattern of stimulation appropriate both in quality and quantity, which will enable him to reach school age without serious intellectual or emotional handicap".** But, as will be pointed out presently, it is not the purpose of early childhood education to anticipate the work of the primary school by formal teaching of the basic skills of reading, writing and the manipulation of number.

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* *Report of the National Seminar on PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION and its Development in Kenya (Malindi 13-18 June 1982)*, Ministry of Basic Education with Bernard van Leer Foundation, p 59.

**Heron, A., *Planning early childhood care and education in developing countries*, IIEP, Unesco, Paris 1979, p 40.

As there is a very large variety of institutions that have been created in different parts of the world to respond to the developmental needs of the child of the pre-school age - mostly concerning his health, nutrition, care and education - the term pre-school institution has sometimes become all-embracing and, depending upon the national context, has been used to denote: creche, day-care centre, day nursery, residential nursery, play group, kindergarten, nursery or preparatory school, educational centre, centre for handicapped children, clinic, etc.

The striking diversity of such institutions notwithstanding, it is advisable "to clarify the specific nature of a pre-school institution, so as to be able to distinguish it more clearly from institutions providing medical treatment, for example.

The chief purpose of a pre-school educational institution is to facilitate the all-round development of the child's personality and promote his education. A clinic providing preventive medical care or a children's hospital are not pre-school educational institutions, even if they have pre-school teachers on their staff. In our view, a sanatorium for small children is still an institution concerned chiefly with curing sick children, even if it provides pre-school education.

So while we maintain that every opportunity, every situation, should be used to educate the young child, if we call an institution a pre-school educational institution we mean that its chief purpose is educational - though it may well have others."*

Relation between care and education

An issue to be considered in the present context concerns the desirability, if not the possibility, of making a distinction between the 'CARE' of a pre-school child - largely

* Mialaret, G., *World survey of pre-school education*. Educational Studies and Documents, No. 19, Unesco, 1976, p 11.

but not wholly physical in nature - and his EDUCATION - largely psychological.

Given the interdependence and essential inseparability of all basic variables which bear on the development of the child at this stage in his growth (health, nutrition, education, etc.), would it not be more meaningful to treat the distinction between care and education during early childhood as rather an arbitrary one and opt in favour of a single synthesised view to cover both care and education? Alastair Heron is positive that this is the only sensible approach, and for good reasons.

To quote him: "Elsewhere I have noted that: At least so far as the English language is concerned, the term 'care' has traditionally involved the notions of 'charge', 'oversight', of 'looking after', of 'watching over'. More recently the evolution of the social-work profession from its origins in 'charitable' activity has given rise to the term 'caring professions', in which 'care' has acquired the connotation of 'concerned assistance, advice and support'. In the context of early childhood it is apparent that the traditional and recent connotations tend to merge: 'day care' or 'child care' can imply something relatively passive or custodial, but also something relatively active or nurturant - and any blend of the two."

"We shall have need to return to this last point in a later chapter, but for the moment I want to focus our attention on what must be seen as a false or artificial distinction, frequently made, between 'care' and 'education'.

This may be observed not only during the pre-school years with which we are here concerned, but right up to the age of legally-recognized 'adulthood', thus covering the complete period of compulsory primary and secondary education and beyond. Having seen what has happened to the connotation of 'care', let us now do the same for the term 'education'!"

"Ask more literate adults what this word means and the chances are very high that you will get a reference to 'schooling' or 'going to school'. In other words, it has strong institutional associations and does not for most people involve something that takes place at home or in other settings within the community. Further, the word 'education' tends to mean for most people whatever they have personally experienced under that name. This is probably a socially-significant fact which many educationists and other intellectually-trained people overlook when they are addressing themselves, in speech or writing, to non-specialist audiences or ordinary people and use the word 'education' freely. For many of those speaking of writing, it is not something that only happens in an institutional setting; it should, when it does so, be far less formal and more interactive an enterprise than it was in the schooldays of their audiences - and they ought to be conscious of the fact that 'care' is something also provided within the school, or that it should be."

*"So far as developing children and adolescents are concerned, both 'caring' and 'educative' experiences should reach them from their complete social environment - at home, in the village or the urban neighbourhood, and in any and every institutional setting where they spend more or much of their waking hours. And we shall have laid a firm foundation for the strategy and tactics of our planning if we - the planners, the advisers, the decision-makers, the providers - recognize and accept, especially for early childhood, that we are concerned with what must be a closely-woven cloth of which the care and the education are indeed the weft and the warp."**

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* Heron, A., op. cit., p 17

The interchangeability of the two terms 'pre-school education' and 'early childhood care and education' (ECCE) in most current discussions and literature on the pre-school child and his development derives essentially from these considerations.

Pre-primary education and primary schooling

Yet another issue concerns whether or not pre-school education should be seen in at least one of its many roles as preparation for entry to the primary school. Aspiring middle-class parents often send their very young children to these schools in the hope that such participation might ensure their success in later schooling situations. The replies from different countries to the 1974 Unesco survey questionnaire have clearly shown that while, as a whole, there is emphasis on the importance of creative activities of all kinds, artistic activities (music, drawing, physical expression) and language development, in several countries pre-school children engage in activities which are clearly a preparation for primary school. Singapore, for instance, referred to a number of pre-primary activities, in particular:

- preparation for arithmetic (counting,sorting, tracing, playing, cutting out shapes);
- preparation for reading (listening to records and stories, listening and recounting, participating in theatrical games);
- preparation for writing (drawing, colouring pictures, filling in colours).

On account of this, while many of these pre-school institutions invoke names like Montessori, Froebel, Rousseau, etc., in general, the activities are mostly structured and the 'backwash effect' of primary schools to which these children seek entry influences the pattern of working in these schools. In fact, in some countries, admission to prestigious primary schools has become a major issue, and nursery schools are even regarded as preparatory schools for such entry 'examinations'.

One has of course to concede that to blame the pre-school institutions alone for this state of affairs would be unfair. They prepare young children for entry to primary schools simply because many parents want them to do precisely that. The demand for their services would slump immediately if they stopped performing this particular, howsoever undesirable educationally, but popular social function. Here is a typical situation where the school is being blamed for something for which the real blame should instead be laid at the door of the society itself. The country replies to the survey questionnaire suggested the following 8 goals, or aspects of goals of pre-school education: (i) providing for the all-round development of the child's personality (satisfaction of the need for intellectual and cognitive development, creative activity and independence); (ii) meeting the child's emotional needs or the need for affection; (iii) meeting the need for social relations, for company, for group and community life; (iv) looking after children or helping mothers; (v) assisting the child's physical and muscular development; (vi) meeting the child's need for linguistic expression; (vii) teaching the rudiments or preparing the child for primary school; (viii) inculcating moral or religious, patriotic and sometimes civic precepts. But the order of the goals, judged from the frequency with which they are mentioned in the replies, is most surprising:

- *goals 1 and 3 : intellectual development and socialisation*
- *goal 7 : preparation for primary school*
- *goal 5 : physical development*
- *goal 4 : child-minding function .*
- *goal 6 : development of language*
- *goal 2 : emotional aspects*
- *goal 8 : moral and religious aspects.**

The places occupied respectively by preparation for primary school and the goal relating to the child's

* Mialaret, G., op. cit., p 34 :

emotional life indicate clearly the gap between the thinking of educators on the one hand, and that of the ordinary people and their representatives on the other. *

The effect of this situation has not been systematically examined, but one would guess that it could not be wholesome for the young child. Undoubtedly, instruction in a foreign language, which has social prestige, is a fact in these nursery schools. A distressing feature in most countries is the stress that is placed on the early introduction to formal learning in literacy and numeracy. In many countries there is no control over the private sector and this makes the problem even more difficult to resolve.

Hopefully in most countries, there is a growing awareness that the transition from the pre-school to the primary level is an important cause of psychological difficulties, which could sometimes be most traumatic for the child. The psychological problem here is that while primary or compulsory education is only too often still characterized by its rigidity and its insistence on traditional teaching methods, pre-school education offers a more modern type of education which is better suited to the needs of the child and receptive to contemporary pedagogical thought. In such cases primary schools have difficulty in settling in these young pupils, who are used to a certain degree of freedom, have inquiring minds and are interested in things which are not necessarily what they are expected to learn.

No wonder there is such a deep interest in several countries of the world in the problem of transition, and an increasing realisation that if the child's personality is to be developed to the full, the educational influence he experiences must constitute a coherent and uninterrupted

* The intensity of the problem of transition from pre-school to primary education would obviously vary from situation to situation, depending on the age of transition. While this is on an average around six years (29 replies), in some countries education is compulsory at five years (6 replies), in others at seven years (17 replies).

process. The Unesco World Survey shows that while in some countries, there is no attempt to solve the problem, either because it is left entirely to the responsibility of parents, or because of the very small number of children at pre-school level, in many others there is a genuine concern to make the transition from pre-school to primary school smoother. Happily several of them have already succeeded in adopting concrete measures towards the mitigation of the problem.

The first and most widespread solution seems to be to hold a meeting between teachers at both levels for exchange of information both of a psychological and an educational nature (knowledge of the child and activities already carried out). Some countries state that this is a matter for the heads of schools (United Kingdom); sometimes the primary school teacher spends a few days in the pre-school institution from which the majority of his pupils come (Mexico, United Kingdom).

Some countries make very careful arrangements for the transition, by taking young children of pre-school level to see their future school (USSR), or the older pupils in the primary school help to organize a large-scale welcome for them (Cyprus).

In some others the transition is facilitated either by integrating the first year of primary school into the pre-school institution (Dominican Republic, Iran, Malta) or by integrating two years of pre-school education into the primary school (Jordan). These two situations are not exactly similar: the former tends to prolong the methods and techniques of pre-school education, whereas the latter tends to make pre-school education more formal.

Some replies, though admittedly few and far between, reveal an approach which opens up new prospects. For instance, in Brazil it is reported that children may move on to primary school before the age of 7 (which may entail risks, if the parents are impatient for their children to enter the primary school), and in Chile children move on when they are sufficiently mature psychologically. In much the same way Mexico applies Laurenço Filho's ABC

test to assess a child's level of maturity for reading. It is probably in the same spirit that Bulgaria, with the aid of departmental people's education councils, has prepared a curriculum for the transition from pre-school to elementary education.

Israel has launched a project to test a new kind of transition. In some countries (for example Ghana, Mauritania, Mexico) primary schools are encouraged to adopt the methods used in pre-school education; and frequently (for example in Sri Lanka) the desire is expressed that it should be the primary schools which change, and that their methods should be nearer to pre-school methods. From a similar standpoint, Japan suggests as a general solution to this problem that all staff should be trained in the same way for both primary and pre-school education.*

Parentethically it must be pointed out that sometimes legislation adopted to promote pre-school education has been counter-productive, which explains the difficulties in co-ordination with primary schools. A special body of teachers and inspectors - frequently of a very high standard - is set up to develop pre-school education. Because of its efficacity and competence it finds itself in competition with somewhat older and less dynamic primary school teachers. The fact that teachers cannot belong to both levels (pre-school and primary) has helped to create a gulf which children have had great difficulty in bridging.**

But will not the abandonment of the teaching of the 3Rs at the pre-school stage retard the child's acquisition of these skills so crucial to success and achievement at school, some interested parent is bound to ask. Not necessarily, is the answer from those who regard the pre-school stage as a critically important one for the child's learning and development no doubt,

* Mialaret, G., op. cit., p 52
** ibid., p 51

but who insist that it must under no circumstances be treated as simply a phase preparatory to the requirements of the primary school.

Here is Muriel Dwyer responding to the issue:

"It is necessary here to say a few words about reading, writing and arithmetic. These now form part of life and they are necessary, even fundamental, for a full exploration of the environment which also includes the man-made environment and his achievements. The 3-6 year-olds are not only capable of acquiring these skills, but also love doing them.

Here, however, we must add a stern note of warning. Children of this age are not ready for formal education, formal teaching, and if it is imposed on them with its immobility etc. it is harmful to their total development. However, there is a world of difference between formal teaching and the knowledge and abilities that can be acquired through purposeful activities and exploration in a specially-prepared environment. Children of this age can and should be allowed, in freedom, to explore these and other achievements of Man.

Six-year-olds have already shown us that they are capable of achieving the following:

- *Be able to express themselves clearly in speech. They also should have minds that are alive, interested and full of curiosity and they should have developed the necessary abilities to expand their fields of exploration.*
- *Read with understanding and with fair fluency.*
- *Know a fount of stories and poems.*
- *Have acquired a sound understanding of the four rules of arithmetic even into millions, and of other basic mathematical concepts.*

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- *Be able to write a story with reasonable spelling.*
- *Write a good hand.*
- *Have a basic knowledge of the natural life around them.*
- *Have a basic knowledge of geography, particularly local geography.*
- *Have a basic knowledge of science, music, art, and be able to use simple library and suitable reference books.*

May I once again underline that these are achievements made in freedom through activity and exploration, not through formal teaching.

If this first period of post-natal life were used to its full; if the potentialities of the children were allowed to find a greater degree of fruition, not only would we have more balanced and harmonious adults but also the literacy problem could be solved with more ease.

If the children were permitted to become literate before six, when nature has given them a special sensitivity to language, then primary education could move on to fulfil the true needs of the 6-12 year-olds which include learning, how to find knowledge and the keys for the exploration of the unseen."*(2)

One possible view

Our own position on whether or not pre-school education should continue to submit to the pressures of primary schooling is in broad agreeemnt with Dwyer's.

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* It is interesting to note that in Maldives, according to its traditional system of education, a child was expected to be literate before admission to school. The task of teaching reading was cast by tradition on the mother - a fact which made literacy an essential qualification for marriage.

Very briefly we believe that to treat pre-school education as a downward extension of the primary school must be given up as too narrow and one-sided a view. Pre-school activities must not be seen merely as a means of developing learning skills to help the child to obtain a higher standard of primary education. We must also reject the view that regards pre-school activities primarily as a means of caring for the child while his parents are away on work in the field, factory or office. Such a view shows insufficient sensitivity to the emotional and psychological needs of the child.

In our view the education of the child of the pre-school age (0 to 6 or 7 years) must be seen as an essential element of his or her preparation for life, and accordingly, pre-school education must be reorganised as an integral part of life-long education. We believe that pre-school education is a period during which children should be guided, stimulated, motivated towards getting to know themselves better and know others; of discovering the world around them; of knowing better their abilities and limitations through sets of activities. Pre-school education should also be a time during which the child comes more and more into contact with language, tradition, culture and values of his or her community. In our judgment such a view of pre-school education is at once desirable and realistic.

FOCUS II: The Why of Pre-school Education

The demand for pre-school education and its qualitative improvement is beginning to rise - slowly but surely - the world over. What has triggered this recent awakening of interest in providing the young child of 0-6 with an environment which is sensitive to his physical, intellectual and emotional needs, and which stimulates him? Before answering the question, let us have a very quick look at the changing scene of ECCE.

Reliable statistics regarding the participation rates of children in the age group 0-6 in different countries of the world are not available, which clearly points up the need to improve statistics and data collecting activities in this particular area. However, according to one rough estimate, in the industrialized countries, during the 1970s, some 40 to 50 per cent of 3-5 year-olds were given access to organized learning opportunities of some kind. In the USA, Head Start (which sought to bring equal opportunities to disadvantaged children) and Great Cities projects marked a definite trend; in the USSR some 50 per cent of children between infancy and seven years were enrolled in pre-school institutions. In Europe there was a proliferation of creches and nursery schools (e.g. in France, Ecole maternelles).(3)

In Latin America, while less than 10% of children in the pre-school age were at the end of the 1970s enrolled in such programmes, there is a growing awareness among government officials and lay people alike that when appropriately structured, such programmes can at least provide preventive services to children and can reach families where other social services are lacking. It is in this context that many programmes use para-professionals from the community as teachers and caretakers and tie into regional health and social service networks. Based on collaboration with nurses, physicians, nutritionists, social workers, and others, such programmes work with families and serve to identify needy children and supply them with health screening, inoculation, and other remedial assistance.

In Asia, despite the general picture regarding ECCE being one of considerable confusion in policies, goals, strategies, implementation of plans, management aspects, and other dimensions of action, some countries have already established nationwide programmes of service to the young child, including early childhood education, as integral components of a national development effort focussed on all ages in the population. In the Republic of China, factories, schools, district and village authorities provide widespread facilities and staff for child-care.

In many developing countries early childhood education has already passed beyond the elitist nursery school stage towards more comprehensive care and preparation for a greater cross-section of societies' children.(4)

In some of the African countries also things are changing, although not as fast as in some other parts of the world.

The genesis of this renaissance of interest in the very young may be attributed, broadly speaking, to three sets of factors. FIRST to be reckoned is the growing body of scientific research and knowledge establishing:

- *that as far as learning and growth are concerned, the period from birth to about 6 years is of exceptional importance;*
- *that in fact no period later in the child's life will offer him the same opportunities again;*
- *and that if advantage is not taken of the possibilities for learning and development at this stage it will be too late in the life of the child to make amends later.*

Although the appreciation of the full implications of this fast-growing corpus of knowledge has been rather slow in coming, the educational planners and policy-makers could not have avoided coming to terms with it indefinitely.

SECOND is the pervasive and ever-accelerating process of social change resulting largely from

industrialization and urbanization. Under their relentless disruptive pressures many of the age-old institutions such as the extended family and the traditional roles of women continue to yield, necessitating fresh appraisals and adaptations, among others, of the institutional arrangements, parental and professional skills and equipment, and the cultural norms relevant to the raising of young children.

A THIRD set of factors which in no small measure has been responsible for and continues to compel attention to ECCE arises from considerations of social justice and egalitarianism pressing for the recognition of the educational and other rights of the child, and for the elimination of poverty, economic disadvantage and cultural deprivation which, when not removed or contained, make a mockery of such rights.

Intellectual development

To present a few illustrative specifics of the three sets of factors mentioned above, most child specialists and developmental psychologists agree that the formation of the human personality begins at the hour of birth or before, and therefore it becomes plain that *education must begin at birth, as by the age of three the child has already laid down the foundations of his personality as a human being.* So great are the conquests he has made that one may well say: the child of three is already a little man. Psychologists have affirmed that if our own ability be compared with the child's we should need many years of hard work to do what he does in his first three. (5)

According to MARIA MONTESSORI man has a double embryonic life.

"At birth, man is relatively immature compared with other primates. This is a statement of fact. Consequently, part of the process of growth and development that these animals complete in the embryonic stage, man accomplishes in the post-natal state, when he is exposed to influences

from the outside world. The post-natal stage is a formative period of intense activity during which the child must create in himself the basic structure of his personality." (6)

PIAGET's epoch-making studies and observations on how the early growth of logical thinking takes place in the child stress the part which experience and favourable educational influences play in the child's cognitive development. To quote:

"We do not know why cognitive structure which can be shown to be wholly maturational in origin...(the maturation of the nervous system) can do no more than create the conditions for a continual expansion of the field of possibilities. The realization of these possibilities demands not only action of the physical environment (practice and acquired experience) but also the educational influences of a favourable social environment." (7)

A considerable number of studies on intellectual development of the individual, in its varying phases, suggest the following: in relation to the general level of intelligence reached at the age of 17, about 50 per cent of aptitudes are already fixed at the age of 4, the following 30 per cent are achieved between 4 and 8 and the remaining 20 per cent between the age of 8 and 17.

Parallel to this, the school career also seems to be determined, in essence, early in life. BLOOM observes that when a child starts the first year of primary school, 33 per cent of his scholastic attainment profile is already decided.

KRAUS, who followed 148 children in the United States - white, black, Hispano-American and oriental - from kindergarten to adulthood, confirms Bloom's observations in the school environment. Kraus writes:

The first assessment found to be in high and stable correlation with the results obtained in the intelligence tests and the reading and mathematical comprehension tests, given subsequently, is a reading test taken in the third year of primary school.

And, Kraus continues, the results in the reading test in the third year of primary school "could have been used, for the majority of the children, as predictors of success or failure, certainly for the following six academic years, thus covering lower secondary education, and even for later".

All this is confirmed by HUSEN. At the end of a longitudinal study carried out in Sweden, Husen finds that the opinion of third-year primary-school teachers and the results in intelligence tests taken at the same time are good predictors for the school career.(8)

*Striking evidence of the importance of environmental and social interaction has been gleaned from study of children isolated during hospitalization, and those deprived of social contacts in orphanages with inadequate staffing facilities. Not only have such cases revealed that intellectual development is retarded, but that the effects are similar to those of malnutrition in that the actual physical mass of the brain is diminished. The International Commission for the Development of Education suggested that this introduces the idea of a hitherto unrecognized social crime - damage inflicted on human beings through negligence and lack of attention.**

Socio-economic factors

Historically speaking, and also as a matter of practical reality, it is primarily the nexus of industrialization, urbanization and changing demographic trends that has unleashed a growing demand for ECCE.

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* Faure, E., et al, *Learning to be*, Unesco, Paris, 1972, p 108

"The effects of urbanization - and also of modernization and other cultural changes even in rural areas - have almost universally been adverse to the extended family, and the trend is clearly towards the small nuclear unit. As another review puts it neatly, 'Consequently, society itself must concern itself with the health, education and stimulation of the child of pre-school age, taking upon itself the tasks which formerly fell to the large family unit and which the nuclear family cannot cope with'."*

Commenting upon the inescapability of parental neglect suffered by the young children of rural migrants to urban centres in some parts of Asia, one perceptive observer has this to say:

"In rural areas too, women in the lower economic strata are obliged to work, and it is a widely-observed phenomenon that the nuclear family is more common as one proceeds down the economic scale. But in the rural occupations, the family as a unit has a greater chance to live and work and move together, with the mother often keeping the children close to her while working in the fields or forests. The nature of urban female occupations rarely allows for this. Women are mostly employed as domestic servants, hawkers and vendors, sweepers, unskilled labour (if at all they are employed outside their homes) servicing, in other words, the more affluent sections of the urban population. This obliges them often to travel long distances and to be away from home at odd hours, and this leads to unavoidable neglect of the children."(9)

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* Heron, A., op. cit., p 19.

An observation from Turkey makes a similar reading:

> "...with the advent of industrialization and the introduction of technology into agriculture, since the 1950s there has been a great movement of populations from the rural to the urban areas in Turkey and even into Europe. So much so that while in 1950 the country was only about 20% urban, today it is 47% urban. Thus, the picture is no longer that of a predominantly agrarian traditional society where children are cared for within the extended family with mother substitutes plenty with close relatives living nearby. Quite the contrary, with the migration of small family units - the nuclear families - and the ever-increasing participation of women in the labour market, in the urban context sometimes there is nobody to care for the child. More than 700,000 women work in industry and services, and the number is increasing. Thus, in addition to the need for early compensatory education, the need for early child care is becoming quite acute with urbanization." (10)

Similar observations have come from many other economically less-developed societies. Referring to the developments in Latin America, for instance, one expert sums up the position in the following words:

> "Other changes have increased the pressure for child care, pre-schooling, and other services for disadvantaged children. Poor women have had no choice but to join the labour force and have been doing so in unprecedented numbers. A shift away from the extended family towards the nuclear family has meant that fewer family members are immediately available as caretakers. No longer can mothers count on grandmothers or aunts, who may themselves be working. Heavy migration has exacerbated the isolation of the family and has meant in many cases that women must take over as heads of households. Nor is it as acceptable as in the past for older siblings to drop out of school to watch over younger brothers and sisters. Finally, attitudes

towards women working are changing, but very slowly, in the machista Latin American society." (11)

Perhaps the single most glaring disadvantage of this erosion of the educational function of the family has been the gradual disappearance and loss of many cultural values, particularly in the realm of human relationships. One pessimistically inclined might even ask: Does not all this really add up to this that, as the primary training ground for the young, the family is on the way out?

The findings of a number of studies made recently are happily reassuring and suggest strongly that any such fear would be unfounded.

"A recent review of research on pre-school education sponsored by the World Bank concludes that 'on the basis of all the evidence discussed, for developing countries we recommend family building and youth education projects that will also include care for young children'. WHO draws a similar conclusion, namely that 'variations in the psycho-social development of children are strongly associated with qualities of parent-child interaction'. And most recently Benjamin Bloom has concluded from a study of creative geniuses in the US that their success in a particular field is due more to the parents' interest in and support of the child's special interest, than to his innate genius." (12)

While the educational role of the home undergoes further mutations from the impact of modernization and technological advances, a more meaningful query could be: How to appraise its care-giving and educational activities from time to time, and in what practical ways, or through what modalities to strengthen or supplement them with programmes from outside the home?

We might conclude this short note on the family and the changes overtaking it with a statement that appeared in a volume published recently in the Soviet Union:

> "There are close relations between the child-care centre and the young family. Some naive people think that group upbringing will edge out family upbringing to a large extent, if it does not completely replace it, and that the role of the parents in the upbringing of their child will decrease accordingly. This of course is not true. Nothing or no one could take the place of a child's family. And in fact our nurseries and kindergartens have never set themselves such a task."*

The under-privileged child

The third set of factors pressing for the creation of national networks of educational and other services both for the school and pre-school child has arisen from considerations of social justice, but even more so from the fact that in so far as early education in developing societies is concerned, the needs of the deprived child are, for all practical purposes, the whole of the story, and not just a part of it. Here is a graphic passage driving home the point succinctly:

> It is a tragic fact that at the beginning of the Second United Nations Development Decade there are more sick, under-nourished and uneducated children in the world than there were ten years ago. Unless the international community is prepared to give vastly greater support, the next ten years will find the number of neglected children increased by millions - despite all the efforts of developing countries, including endeavours by some to curb population growth. Every half-minute, 100 children are born in developing countries. Twenty of them will die within the year. Of the eighty who survive, sixty will have no access to modern medical care during their childhood. An equal number will suffer from malnutrition during the crucial weaning and toddler-age - with the possibility

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* Aksarina, N. and Smirnova, N., *Social education of pre-school children in the Soviet Union*, Novasti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1975, p 8-9, as in A. Heron, op. cit., p 62.

of irreversible physical and mental damage; and during this period their chance of dying will be twenty to forty times higher than if they lived in Europe or North America. Of those who live to school age, only a little more than half will ever set foot in a classroom and less than four out of ten of those who do enter will complete the elementary grades. This situation is especially disturbing when we realize that three-quarters of all the world's children under fifteen years of age - nearly 1,000 million children - live in developing countries.*

The thought that while in most developing countries 70 to 80% of their populations reside in the rural areas (which as a rule come under the category of deprived regions, their pre-school services covering in many cases not even 10% of the children) and have 80% or even more of their facilities concentrated in the urban areas, adds further to the poignancy and injustice of the situation.

Deprivation is worldwide; there is hardly a region which does not suffer from its ravages:

Almost 25% of Latin America's population - 80 million children - are six years of age or younger. An estimated 50 to 65 million of them are growing up in environments characterized by poor hygiene and sanitary conditions, inadequate housing, insufficient nutrition, and lack of adequate parental or caretaker attention because parents and older siblings often must work to meet basic physical needs (United Nations, 1975b; World Bank, 1975, 1978).(13)

In Africa the problem of pre-school education in some of the rural economies is aggravated by "the absence of fathers who migrate to towns and neighbouring countries for employment. This means that many women have had to assume additional child-rearing responsibilities and many fathers are unaware of their

*United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Report on children*, New York, 1971, p 1, quoting from *'Progress begins with the child'* (UNICEF 326).

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children's need".

A number of African countries are also concerned over the big number of refugee children in the region and their deplorable state. One estimate suggests that as of May 1980 there were 700,000 refugees in camps in three regions in Somalia. Children between the ages 0-14 years formed 60 per cent of the total numbers. Most of these children are faced with problems of food, water, sanitation, health and education. Special programmes are needed for refugee children who are often destitute and deprived of a normal environment for their growth and development.

Concern has also been general that handicapped children - of which the number is quite large - who should, "as far as possible, be integrated with normal children in play groups and other child-care centres", were not receiving the benefits of any such programmes.(14)

But the problem must not be seen in the rural context only; the situation in the urban areas could sometimes be worse! At least that is the assessment of a perceptive specialist from India.

"The urban child is caught up in a vicious triangle. Hazardous health conditions in the squalor and misery of slums, poverty, lack of health care is a result of the ignorance and illiteracy of parents, and the insecurity and hardship of life form one side of this triangle; the lack of adequate adult care, protection and guidance which can be attributed to the nuclear family and the absence of both parents and older siblings from the home is the second side: the third side is the social and cultural milieu of the slums."(15)

And furthermore:

"Ignorance, apathy, mobility, drift, illiteracy and distrust have led to the phenomenon that slum dwellers do not make full use even of the available urban

amenities. Studies in Bombay have revealed the appalling extent to which slum mothers were unaware of the health care and other facilities available for pre-school children. A similar situation prevails with regard to the poorest in the rural areas also."(16)

"Allied to the lack of roots in the traditional culture and social structure, the wider family network and the rural recreations on the one hand, is the cultural barrenness of slums on the other - the lack of healthy recreation, of space, the absence of any sort of constructive activity or learning. The developmental consequences of being reared in such an environment are naturally alarming."(17)

Whether in developing countries or the industrialised ones, the precise considerations responsible for the contemporary spurt of interest in pre-school education must in each case be seen to arise from a multiplicity of factors, and to vary from one national situation to another. But there is agreement among educators, specialists in health services, nutritionists and social workers that what is needed for maximum growth in a disadvantaged child's potential is an integrated programme responding to his biological and psycho-social needs simultaneously. Research suggests that while malnutrition and ill-health at an early age might not retard cognitive development of the child as much as is commonly believed, an early lack of environmental stimulation will.

"If the child does not receive attention from the family or is too weak to explore and experiment with his environment, his learning will be retarded. A carefully-researched experiment in Columbia concluded that 'combined nutritional, health, and educational treatments between 3½ and 7 years of age can prevent large losses in potential cognitive ability."*

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* McKay, H. et al, *Improving Cognitive Ability in Chronically Deprived Children*, a Ford Foundation reprint from Science, 1978, as quoted in "Notes, Comments..." N.S. 107, p 3

The issue of priority

But someone is bound to turn around and ask: why this hullabaloo about pre-schooling when, as everybody knows, the developing countries do not simply have the funds to back it up? Why indeed, when millions of children die of disease or malnutrition every year before attaining the age of 5, when despite the commitment of governments to universal primary education, when millions of children do not see the inside of a classroom throughout their lives, and when the progress of literacy has been so exasperatingly slow that the world has ended up by having more illiterates today than at any time before? When countries do not have money to manage such high priority programmes, what is the case for pre-school education which to most people appears at best a low priority welfare activity?

Rhetoric apart, the question is important. The question is: how does one determine priorities? And is pre-school education a low priority programme?

Cost-benefit analysis

To a student of economics of education this matter of costs and priorities might well appear to be simply a case of the need to subject ECCE to some kind of a cost-benefit analysis before decisions are made. Such an approach to the question need not be dismissed out of hand, for if the analysis is done with care and imagination, it could throw interesting and possibly useful light on the relative priorities of competing options. But it would be naive indeed to expect in the present state of the art, at any rate, that an issue like whether or not to accord a higher priority to pre-school education than some other educational or social service could be sorted out by using cost-benefit analysis. There are many problems

here;* but particularly horrendous are those concerning the measurement of benefits associated with different options.

> *In the case of pre-school education one will have to consider the long-term impact of programmes, for example on physical growth, IQ, school "readiness" (in terms of social skills, language ability, conceptualization), access to primary schooling, progress through the system (how far, how fast, with what repetition, with what special attention), school achievement, other aspirations and so on. It would also be important to include less obvious benefits to families and to the community. But how to do that reasonably well? There are many areas of social development like pre-school education, in which for a long, long time to come, perhaps for ever, we shall have to be guided by qualitative evaluation, and even more so by common sense and pragmatic judgment. Devices like shadow pricing or giving notional values may have use sometimes but remain hypothetical and normally receive acceptance only if the results of analysis are ultimately found to be in accord with common-sensical judgment. But this is question-begging pure and simple, and vitiates from a logical point of view the entire analytical operation.*

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* There is, for instance, the failing, which cost-benefit analysis shares with so many other techniques of social analysis, that it can operate only within the prevailing cultural norms of the society. To take a concrete example, it can be easily shown that in some of the countries having a big 'refugee' problem on their hands, poppy cultivation, processing and selling of tobacco or running massage parlours in big cities, are sometimes more remunerative than say carpentry, carpet-weaving, basket-making, hand-printing of cloth, or even school-teaching. Now what use can a social policy-maker or welfare administrator possibly have for such a finding in deciding upon the choice of a suitable training programme for homeless men and women needing vocational training towards employment and rehabilitation?

We must also not forget that when during the 1950s and the 1960s most developing nations of the world committed themselves to universal primary education or the eradication of illiteracy, they were not guiding themselves by the findings of any analytical studies; the decision-makers were acting essentially on the basis of values, culture, and the intuitive perception perhaps that though not a sufficient determinant, literacy is a 'necessary' part of the quality of the human condition. In dealing with pre-school education at the present stage of its development, the policy- or decision-maker is in an identical situation.

The case for pre-schooling

The appropriateness or otherwise of cost-benefit studies in determining priorities in the present context notwithstanding, it should not be difficult at all to appreciate some of the great benefits accruing from an effective programme of pre-school education:

- In the first place, the value of early identification and remediation of problems in the child's development (e.g. malnutrition, physical and mental handicaps, etc.) which has been well documented cannot be over-stressed. Children so identified and helped either overcome the problems altogether or the problems are minimized. The results are critical for the formation of a healthy new generation.

- Secondly, early childhood education is also increasingly recognized throughout the world as a valuable preparation for subsequent schooling, particularly for children who would otherwise be backward or at a disadvantage when entering more formal schooling, as well as for children who might never enter schooling.

- Also early childhood education, through its close linkage with the adult community, can be a valuable force for overall social development by helping adults obtain confidence, skills, improved self-concept, etc., through their active engagement in such programmes. The significance of this last

point for mobilizing human resources in developing societies can hardly be overemphasized.

But these are not the only payoffs of pre-school education. David Fisk lists several others, two of which appear to be particularly important. In his own words:

"(1) Providing an entry point

'Over the years we tried many approaches to stimulate community-level interest in our project', said the monitor of a UNICEF-supported grassroots integrated rural development project in Latin America. 'We had a large rural road-building project, we had a tree-planting effort, a school lunch programme, we even set up a consumer and agricultural marketing co-operative structure. This was all done in consultation with the communities, but none of these seemed to mobilize the community in a self-sustaining way.' One of the extension agents went to a High/Scope workshop on community-based pre-school education. He decided to discuss the concept with a few communities. Soon a community committee had been established; a volunteer teacher was selected, and a pilot programme was underway. UNICEF provided a relatively small amount of training through an enthusiastic field team, and a stipend for the community teacher. The concept spread like wildfire in the neighbouring communities. Today these pre-school programmes are the outstanding feature of the community development effort in the region. We are not yet sure what we tapped, but it is obvious that the adults are much more motivated to act on behalf of their community by the opportunity to improve the life chances of their children than they are by other concerns.

Investments to improve the quality of the environment for human development in the early years of life can give immediate return by providing an entry point for other development programmes. The well-being of future generations is a concern that has strong motivational power for all adults everywhere. In this case the investment in non-formal pre-school education had an

immediate payoff, not only because it provided the entry point for a broader development effort, but also because it proved to be the aspect of the development effort that elicited sustained community interest and spearheaded the growth of the programme throughout the region. (18)

(2) Participation of Women in Development

High quality environments for young children also have an immediate effect to the extent that they represent an essential component of a programme targeting other development objectives. After studying the needs of working women in six less-developed countries, a report issued by the League of Women Voters concluded:

'A web of deprivation characterizes family life in underdeveloped regions of the world. In particular, low-income women are severely limited by the lack of job skills, lack of employment opportunities, and the responsibilities for care of their numerous children... There is no sense in skills training without a job waiting for the trained women, and the major concern a woman has in accepting training or employment is, 'Who will take care of my children?'... A child-care programme is thus a crucial component of development strategy. It can free women to take advantage of skills training and job opportunities, and thus improve family income. It can reduce infant and child mortality and morbidity by providing adequate nutrition and medical attention. It can foster the cognitive development of children. It can facilitate non-formal education of the parents. It can be a focus for community organization and development. In short, high-quality pre-school provision can enlist and facilitate the participation of women in the development process.' (19)

Thus there is a good case for contesting the view that pre-school education is a low priority activity. Of course allotting a high or a higher priority to ECCE is by itself no solution to the cost problem. If pre-school programmes have to meet the twin challenges of quality and quantity, we must either find additional

resources to support pre-school education or reduce its overall costs. Is this or is this not a feasible proposition?

Hopefully there is a growing realisation of the need to evolve innovative delivery systems (of ECCE) which are not only sensitive to the social and cultural needs of the developing communities, but also get round the problem of costs by seeking to:

- *locate pre-school services as far as possible in homes and local communities;*
- *make maximum use of home-based activities in designing educational experiences for the young child; and*
- *give every possible encouragement to parents and local people in operating the services directly.*

It is not difficult to appreciate why such an approach should so easily meet the test of feasibility! The intervention of the family would hardly cost anything which it or the local community cannot meet from their existing resources. Further as the time and energy devoted by parents, siblings and other adults in a family can or need hardly be costed other than notionally, the main costs involved in such an approach will broadly be for such purposes as:

- *disseminating ideas and relevant information through media and other means of public information; home- and community-based activities through the mobilisation of locally-available human and material resources;*
- *providing minimum equipment and materials primarily for purposes of demonstration;*
- *ensuring the mobility of resource persons to serve as catalytic agents in the diffusion of ideas and adoption or adaptation of different strategies or models;*
- *providing encouragement to institutions and individuals whose achievements deserve to be recognised and experiences widely diffused.*

The costs could be expected to be very modest indeed.

Brazil: a concrete example of reduced costs

An interesting experiment establishing the feasibility of substantial cost reduction in child care was carried out by OMEP - the world pre-school organization in several countries. In Brazil it began about 20 years ago, in the Rio de Janeiro slums ("favelas"). The idea is to make use of an existing tradition in low-income families, of the women asking a neighbour to look after her children when she occasionally has to be away, and to give this custom a permanent character, under the guidance, training and monitoring of the Organization's technicians and volunteers.

Considering the job opportunities (mainly of a domestic nature) for women from the satellite towns to work for the wealthier families of the central area of Brasilia ("Plano Piloto"), the need became clear to increase the availability of day-care provided by the Government for pre-school children, for the low-income population living on the outskirts with a double purpose: to free mothers for work and to give the children the protection they need in this highly vulnerable phase of life, thus assuring them the full capacity for growth and development. To carry out the desired expansion through conventional day-care centres, however, became impossible for the same reasons set out above, summed up as limited physical and financial resources. This is why the Government of the Federal District decided to set up, through its Social Services Secretariat, a neighbourhood system as proposed by the OMEP experiment, adapting it to a wider range through the creation and application of new operational methods.

With a view to exploring the appeal of the word DAY-CARE CENTRE and marking the fact that assistance is given at the home level (the home of a neighbour), the project was named HOME DAY-CARE CENTRE. It was brought into being as from September 1979, by the Social Services Foundation of the Federal District, the executive agency for the Social Services Secretariat programmes. Within the first year of operation, 1,700 pre-school children came to be cared for in 472 home day-care centres set up in the satellite towns in Brasilia. (20)

At December 1980 prices, the cost per child came to US$ 26.15 a month, taking into account all the cost factors

(material, equipment, fuel, salaries, etc.) except those borne by the mother of the child herself which stood at around US$ 10.75 for food per month (25 days) with daily average intake of 1,400 calories. In the traditional day-care centre system, this cost, over the same period, was US$ 53.85 a month, given all factors except food. That is, it would cost twice as much to choose the conventional system. (21)

It is a matter of some satisfaction that in a number of countries, innovative programmes of pre-school education along these lines are being initiated or assisted at the ground level to test the feasibility of alternative methods of providing learning opportunities for the deprived pre-school age children. But there is little cause for complacency; the existing pre-school programmes do not even touch the fringe of the problem. The road ahead is long and arduous. More determined efforts by governments and voluntary bodies alike, to be sustained over a long period of time, with a clearer perception of the priorities of pre-school education, will be necessary before the back of the problem is effectively broken.

International aid

What can international aid do to assist in the creation and development of such viable, all-round, culturally-sensitive programmes of pre-school education in the developing countries?

The first point that needs to be made here - and it cannot be made too emphatically - is that this is essentially a task which nations have got to do for themselves; no one from outside could ever do it for them. The keener the realisation of this simple reality, the better for every one concerned. The only meaningful role an international agency can play is that of an interested friend who shares with each nation

the concern it has for its very young children, and is willing as best as its limited resources will allow it to help arrange those badly-needed activities or programmes that could serve to facilitate or catalyse the desired change process. Once the process has started off, the responsibility to maintain the change and to add to its momentum, must again, in the main belong to the concerned nation. What then could some of these activities, or purposes to be supported by international aid really be?

There can be no absolute priorities; the needs deserving international support must vary from country to country. And yet if the aid policies of an international agency are not to lay themselves open, all too frequently, to the charge of arbitrariness, unfairness, partiality or downright irrelevance there must be some good criteria to follow.

Going by the spirit of the general principle 'Costs low - benefits high', some of the feasible activities that readily came to one's mind are these:

(1) Dissemination of information, knowledge, experience and important research finds in ECCE through publications and other media.

(2) Face-to-face interactions and exchange among policy-makers, administrators, research workers and field workers through well-prepared and sharply-focussed seminars, workshops, conferences, colloquia, round tables and other get-togethers.

(3) Inter-country visits, internships and study projects primarily to sensitise policy-makers and senior administrators to different aspects of ECCE.

(4) Training of personnel especially teacher educators, supervisors and administrators with a view to enlarging and improving the national training capabilities in pre-school education.

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(5) Preparation and production of materials including:

- *Training materials such as slides, filmstrips and short films for teachers and para-professional assistants.*
- *Exampler materials for pre-school children (e.g. stories, games, learning activities, etc.)*
- *'Do it yourself' guidebooks for teachers providing resource materials for content and teaching aids to be produced locally, that is, with local materials and local skills.*
- *Manuals or 'handbooks of suggestions' for teachers, supervisors and administrators.*

(6) Developmental or action-oriented research aimed at solving practical problems or those from the field with high impact potential.

(7) Supplies of essential materials, machines and equipment particularly for stimulating local production of educational materials.

(8) Short-term consultancy missions or expert advice on specific problems or clusters of interrelated problems.

Importance of demonstration

But whilst all these activities are highly relevant to the development of ECCE in low-income countries, the importance of mounting concrete projects to demonstrate the essential feasibility of a needed service in pre-school education can not be overstressed. With the rapidly changing socio-economic scene in many countries, newer and newer arrangements to respond to the needs of the very young child are emerging. Many of these are not only more in tune with the cultural characteristics of the communities they are supposed to serve, they also carry a more reasonable price tag.

Examples:

In some places the organizers of pre-school facilities have improvised or otherwise developed low-cost solutions to the building problem by using the accommodation made available by a willing and interested parent, or by constructing it with community labour on a public piece of land. In some places pre-school teachers are trained and encouraged to use only indigenous materials and methods to provide stimulation to the child in the 3-6 age group. In some places selected adolescents with a short intensive training in child health, child development and teaching techniques are pressed into employment as teachers and care-givers. In some places food for young children is provided by the villagers collectively and is cooked by those available for the job for free. In some other countries mothers function as volunteer auxiliaries, which has served to bring down the cost of pre-school education substantially. And so on. By mounting or assisting a concrete project on the ground to demonstrate the essential feasibility of one or more of these and similar newer practices will provide fresh impetus to the efforts of a community wanting to meet the developmental needs of its very young children with some measure of adequacy.

The record of pilot projects in the past in most places makes a dismal reading because of the impossibility of replicating the conditions of their operation. But when a demonstration is arranged under known familiar conditions, which are part of the community's day-to-day existence, so to speak, it can work wonders. Here is a very special opportunity for the field programme officers of international organizations having a stake in the education and welfare of young children.

Concerns and Priorities as Perceived by National Professionals

The concerns and priorities in the field of early childhood care and education, as perceived by national experts and professionals of both industrialized and developing countries, can best be presented in the form of extracts from the recommendations of a number of international, regional and national forums held in various parts of the world during the last decade. These recommendations crystallize the thinking in regard to the major questions dealt with in this Digest and also suggest concrete courses of action. Apart from presenting the general trends relating to the provision of early childhood care and education, these recommendations also highlight regional variations in emphasis:

1. MEETING OF EXPERTS ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS, Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, U.S.A., 4-9 March 1974 (Unesco)

I. It is recommended that COUNTRIES CO-ORDINATE THE SERVICES PROVIDED UNDER THEIR HEALTH, WELFARE AND EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES. This should be done not only at the national level but it should also be implemented at the lowest political unit where possible. At the local level, it is hoped that this co-ordination will take the form of child-parent service centres.

These centres would provide, at whatever level of assistance possible, support to the family and child during the pre-natal, post-natal and childhood years in the areas of health, welfare and education.

II. It is recommended that Unesco foster THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CHILD RESEARCH CENTRES IN MEMBER NATIONS WHICH WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT, COLLECTION AND DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION IN THE AREA OF CHILD

DEVELOPMENT. Particular emphasis will be placed on issues which pertain more or less directly to the educational process. It is further recommended that some of these centres shall be affiliated with and HAVE AS THEIR PRIME CONCERN THE STUDY OF TEACHER TRAINING.

III. It is recommended that the child research centres referred to above be encouraged to engage in CROSS CULTURAL RESEARCH.

The case for international research collaboration is easily stated. Most problems studied by research are common to most countries, though not necessarily equally relevant, and the findings should be valid far beyond the borders of any particular country. Furthermore, especially in the social sciences where controlled laboratory conditions are more difficult to stage, the world at large constitutes a laboratory of social phenomena, offering a far wider factor set and more varying conditions than any national situation. Only against an international background can the dependence of research findings upon special national conditions be identified, and the validity of results be put to test.

2. SYMPOSIUM ON THE LINK BETWEEN PRE-SCHOOL AND PRIMARY EDUCATION, Versailles, France, 24 to 29 November 1975; SYMPOSIUM ON THE LINK BETWEEN PRE-SCHOOL AND PRIMARY EDUCATION, Part II: the establishment of continuity, Bournemouth, United Kingdom, 20 to 26 March 1977; SYMPOSIUM ON THE INTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS' CHILDREN INTO PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION, Berlin, 6 to 11 December 1976; SYMPOSIUM ON PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN LIVING IN SPARSELY POPULATED AREAS, Storlien, Sweden, 11 to 16 September 1977 (Council of Europe).

1.1 Easing the transition from pre-primary to primary education:

It is recommended that member states, whatever the structure of their school system:

- *organise school practices as flexibly as possible, especially in the final year of pre-school education and the first year of primary schooling;*
- *promote, in so far as possible, the personalisation of certain types of learning, by adapting and apportioning progress requirements so as to prevent children from falling behind and having to repeat;*
- *ensure that the indissociability of pre-school and primary education is understood by everyone, at every level, and that everything possible is done to establish continuity between the different levels.*

1.2 The maturation of the child:

It is recommended that member states:

- *encourage research into the different aspects of this concept viewed as an on-going process unmarked by rigid "levels";*
- *adapt curricula and methods to this process and base them on the child's pattern of development.*

1.3 Stimulation of public and parental awareness:

It is recommended that member states:

- *set up teams composed of the teachers of pre-school and primary classes, experts, head teachers and parents, so that the public may be made aware of the liaison and continuity between the two levels;*
- *promote exchanges of views between pre-school and primary teachers, to discuss the problems involved in transfer;*
- *train teachers to view education as a whole so that they may help parents to understand what is taking place in the different phases of education;*
- *inform the public of the training and qualifications of pre-school teachers;*
- *open infant and primary classes to families so that they may take a more active part in school life;*

- *inform families of the educational and medico-social services available to their children;*

- *take steps to eliminate the value judgements which deprecate the activities of pre-school classes (where children "only play") in favour of those of primary classes (where they "work");*

- *employ specialist forms of communications (teachers' and parents' preiodicals) and mass media (television, radio, press, etc.) to inform and instruct the public with regard to the necessity for relations, co-ordination and continuity between the two levels.*

1.4 Initial and further training of teachers:

It is recommended that member states:

- *ensure that the initial and in-service training of teachers at both levels be either comparable or the same, or at least include periods of joint training;*

- *ensure that teacher training covers the basic socio-educational problems and also provide practical experience, where possible, in different environments;*

- *give priority, in in-service training sessions, to the problems of the transition from pre-school to primary education;*

- *depending upon the particular circumstances of each state, emphasise either the initial or in-service training of teaching staffs;*

- *give nursery assistants in charge of pre-school classes a background in educational psychology suited to the requirements of very young children;*

- *focus applied research on the study and analysis of the needs expressed by teachers at both levels.*

1.5 Organization of a common curriculum:

It is recommended that member states:

- *organize the curriculum of pre-school and primary education as a continuous whole beginning with the basic learning*

patterns that lead to the subsequent categorization of knowledge in subject areas;

- *study different organizational methods which can facilitate curriculum continuity.*

1.6 Research, information and guidance:

It is recommended that member states:

- *transform research into action-research encompassing the development of the child as a whole;*
- *commission research aimed at introducing practical innovations throughout schooling and at evaluating the educational system as a whole;*
- *bear in mind that in-service training for the teachers involved in it, and the provision of guidance in educational psychology within the school, are also functions of research.*

2.1 Pre-school provision: Considering that:

- it is the role of government to lay down general principles for the development of the curriculum;
- schools also have a responsibility to determine the specific curriculum according to the circumstances in which children are living;
- children have both individual needs and common needs, the latter arising, for example, from the locality in which they are living;
- for all children physical, emotional, social and intellectual development is crucial,

It is recommended that member states:

- *should accord high priority to achieving a situation where pre-school education can be offered to all children for at least two years before the start of compulsory schooling;*
- *should set as an aim the provision of pre-school education without charge to the families;*

- *should explore all possible means of persuading parents to take advantage of at least one year of pre-school education for their children; by considering, for example, compulsory registration of all children eligible for pre-school education, though without necessarily making attendance compulsory;*

- *should plan to bring pre-school and primary education under the same ministry, since both stages are part of the same continuous process of education; or, where this proves impossible, should establish a service responsible for co-ordinating the work of all agencies and institutions involved in pre-school provision for children.*

2.2 A common curriculum:

It is recommended that member states:

- *seek to establish a common curriculum extending through both the pre-school and primary stages of education;*

- *design opportunities in the first stage for the child to know himself, to develop his whole personality, to become aware of his potential, and to master the skills appropriate to his stage of development;*

- *design opportunities in the second stage for him to acquire and consolidate the basic skills of learning already partially apprehended;*

- *define, having regard to their own national situation:*

  a. *a flexible and adaptable maturity threshold which all children who have followed the first stage would normally be deemed to have reached, before they embark on organised scholastic learning;*

  b. *a body of knowledge and skills which children would normally have acquired before they move into the second stage.*

2.3 Joint design of curricula:

It is recommended that member states:

- *encourage the joint design of curricula for pre-school and primary school, with the aim of integrating the two*

stages;

- *enable the team of teachers, the parents and other relevant persons and organizations to take an active role in shaping the curriculum and the subsequent reform process;*
- *provide where necessary expert help in shaping and improving the curriculum;*
- *encourage those responsible to design a curriculum which seeks to promote all aspects of a child's development, and to take particular account of:*

  i. the developing relationship between himself, his peers and the adults who care for him;

  ii. his experience and exploration of the environment;

  iii. his growing understanding of social values and rules;

  iv. his gradual mastery of motor and instrumental skills.

2.4 Flexibility:

It is recommended that member states:

- *encourage teachers to take account of various ways of promoting learning, for example: through experience, through play and exploration, through self-chosen activities, through individualized learning, and through working in groups of varied composition for different purposes:*
- *ensure that new school buildings are designed so that they can support different ways of teaching and learning;*
- *encourage the production of teaching materials designed to facilitate the ways of learning referred to above.*

2.5 Training of teachers:

It is recommended that member states:

- *plan to include a common element in the training of both pre-school and primary teachers in order to familiarize them with children's development throughout both stages and to give them understanding of the aims and methods in both;*

- *plan to continue this process of familiarization through in-service training and especially through the exchange of visits;*

- *facilitate exchanges of posts for a period, with the same objective;*

- *ensure that equal professional status is accorded to teachers in both stages.*

2.6 Continuity between home, school and the community:

It is recommended that member states:

- *examine ways of co-ordinating the efforts of the various social and welfare organizations with those of the school and the home, in a partnership of mutual respect;*

- *encourage regular contact between schools and parents on a basis of welcoming friendship, throughout the years of their children's pre-school and primary education;*

- *devise ways of informing parents and the public about education in general and their local schools in particular, whether by radio, television, press, local communications, or parents' and public meetings;*

- *develop ways of actively involving parents in the education of their children;*

- *encourage parents, along with teachers, psychologists, paediatricians, social workers and other adults, to appreciate and understand the roles of the others and to co-operate with them, while continuing to undertake their own distinctive role;*

- *encourage programmes of education for present and potential parents in child development and in social interaction, beginning in the later years of their attendance as pupils at secondary schools;*

- *consider entrusting the co-ordination of the efforts of these various adults to an agency or a person (whether a head teacher, inspector, adviser or administrator) able to inspire and direct all the partners in their continuing support of the school and the children.*

3.1 Place of migrant children in the pre-school system:

It is not in the migrant child's interest to set up special nursery school sections. It is necessary, on the other hand, for the measures recommended on their behalf to be taken into account by the whole pre-school institution.

Similarly, in all decisions made by the pre-school institution (curricula and school reform, adjustment of programmes and time-tables, laws and regulations, teacher training etc.), account must be taken of the interests of migrant children.

3.2 Assistance by students from the country of origin:

To remedy the shortage of competent staff, the countries of origin could entrust their modern-language students who go abroad towards the end of their studies to perfect their linguistic knowledge with the task - after suitable training - of teaching migrant children their home culture. Subsequently, such students could even become, subject to acquiring the necessary qualifications, regular teachers in the state school system of the host country.

3.3 Professional ethics:

A spirit of inter-cultural solidarity should be introduced into an "international ethical code for teachers" so as to give education a thoroughly human character.

3.4 Respect for the religious convictions and traditions of families:

In educational practice, the fullest respect and understanding must be shown for the religious convictions and traditions of the children and their families.

3.5 Research:

To preclude further failures in the education of migrant children (lack of integration, semi-lingualism, semi-culturalism), research should be developed - for example, in the area of the mother tongue, the thought and expression mechanisms of the pre-school child, etc.

Research in the pre-school education area should be carried out with the active participation of members of pre-school staff.

It would seem essential for all research of this kind to be carried out by a multi-disciplinary team comprising not only teachers and research workers of the host country but also persons from the country of origin. The expenditure entailed could be borne by the host country.

Research in the psycho-educational field should be carried out with the help of psychologists from the country of origin (selection of tests and interpretation of results).

Research (careful and prolonged observation) into the spontaneous behaviour of children in the pre-school environment might lead us to understand the origin and cause of such behaviour and to devise teaching methods which could help channel them towards fruitful interchange between children of various ethnic origins.

It is noted that the attitude of both the host population and the immigrant population towards immigration is influenced by stereotypes. It would therefore be desirable to study the ways in which our own attitude towards the reception of foreign workers is affected by the country they come from just as we study the integration conditions specific to them.

It is proposed that the Council of Europe co-ordinate research and reports on experiments and circulate all relevant literature to research workers or educators in member countries.

4.1 Types of provision of pre-school education in sparsely populated areas:

It is recommended that:

- *through the development of effective co-ordination of available resources and services in sparsely populated areas, parents as well as children should be helped to uphold and enhance constructive relationships within the family and the community;*
- *any action taken on behalf of children from birth to school age must form part of a wider framework of support of individual families and the small community as a whole;*
- *the parameters of pre-school education shall include the basic individual and environmental needs of children;*
- *effective alternative provision for scattered areas must depend on the close partnership of parents, children, pre-school education, the local community and the providers of these facilities.*

4.2 Identification of the problems connected with establishing pre-school facilities in sparsely populated areas:

It is recommended that:

- *there should be no relaxation of effort to make the general public and those who administer their affairs increasingly aware of the importance of the early years and pre-school education in rural areas in particular;*
- *serious consideration should be given to providing appropriate care and resources for the pre-school education of children with specific disabilities;*
- *the various implications of transporting children of pre-school age should be carefully examined in the light of their basic needs.*

4.3 Identification of the methods which have proved most successful and cost-effective:

It is recommended that:

- *the child's pre-school education should not alienate him from his environment, therefore such provision should be made in an environment close to that of the child's home, both in terms of distance and similarity;*
- *the adults charged with educating and caring for the young child should be familiar with and able to share the culture which is familiar to the child;*
- *pre-school establishments in sparsely-populated areas should devise strategies for the involvement and active participation of parents (and other concerned adults), and should encourage continuous home visiting.*

4.4 *Continuity between pre-school and primary school education:*

It is recommended that:

- *co-operation with primary schools should be considered essential and each area should devise means of ensuring that this takes place;*
- *to facilitate this co-operation, all the personnel concerned should come under the responsibility of the local or regional educational authorities.*

3. REGIONAL MEETING OF EXPERTS ON NEW APPROACHES TO EDUCATION OF CHILDREN OF PRE-SCHOOL AGE, Bangkok, Thailand, 4 to 12 September 1978 (Unesco)

At the national level

(1) It is recommended that Member States consider including specifically the concerns for young children in their socio-economic policies, and incorporating in these policies the following:

- *the emphasis on children of disadvantaged populations;*
- *the inclusion of the whole age-range 0 to 6+ years;*

- *the need to provide integrated services for the development of the whole child, including health, education and nutrition;*
- *the focus on the child in the family, and where possible, the child and the family;*
- *the role of early childhood services as vehicles for social change;*
- *the place of early childhood education as a component of lifelong education.*

(2) It is recommended that member states, in developing strategies and plans to carry out these policies, consider that:

- *a range and diversity of programmes be developed in recognition of differences that exist among various sections of the population in a country, seeking to complement these differences in order to enable each child to attain his or her full potential, and all groups to participate in the mainstream of development;*
- *emphasis be placed on a decentralized approach to programme design, and on the pivotal role of the local worker, including the parent;*
- *a consistent methodology be built around the principle of 'participation' which would pervade all the programmes;*
- *continuity be established with informal education in the home, with other stages of education, and other social services, so that early childhood education could make a significant contribution to social change;*
- *public awareness of the importance of early childhood be created, and support for the policies and programmes be generated.*

(3) It is recommended that Member States, in the implementation of policies, plans and strategies, consider the following:

- *the development and strengthening of institutions, specially for: research in early childhood; production of literature, materials and equipment*

for children; production of teaching/learning material for the preparation of personnel;

- *the development and strengthening of infrastructures, especially for: mass communication for support of programmes; decentralization of programme and curriculum planning; the delivery of integrated services; the delivery of mass training; continuous supervision, monitoring and evaluation;*
- *the development and strengthening of competencies required for the above institutional and infra-structure operations;*
- *the development and strengthening of field experimental projects.*

At the International Level

(1) It is recommended that, at the request of Member States, Unesco and other interested organizations:

- *provide assistance to the above actions at the national level;*

(2) It is recommended that Unesco:

- *establish a network of national centres, programmes and projects for early childhood education in Member States, with the Unesco Regional Office for Education in Asia and Oceania acting as a facilitating agent;*
- *arrange for inter-country exchange of experiences through regional and sub-regional meetings and seminars, study visits and placement programmes;*
- *develop comparative studies in co-operation with Member States;*
- *set up a data bank and a Clearing House service in the area of early childhood development;*
- *convene, at regular intervals, a regional panel of early childhood educators and researchers to monitor progress in the region and suggest future directions for action.*

4. REGIONAL SEMINAR ON "THE NEEDS OF THE AFRICAN CHILD AND THE ADAPTATION OF PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION TO HIS CULTURAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT", Dakar, Senegal, 5 to 9 November 1979 (Unesco)

(1) Goal of Pre-School Education: To satisfy the developmental needs of the child of pre-school age of today to enable us satisfy his future needs.

(2) General Objectives: Pre-school education should:

(i) *aim to satisfy the nutritional and health needs of the child;*

(ii) *promote and harmonize the integration of the child into his environment;*

(iii) *improve the child's communication, perception, and psychomotor skills;*

(iv) *help his organization of knowledge gained from his experience.*

Specific objectives

- *help the child attain the mastery of language necessary for self-expression and communication with others;*
- *offer the child adequate and diversified stimulations for the sharpening of all his senses;*
- *stimulate the growth and use of basic intellectual processes (curiosity, imagination, inquiry, etc.).*

(3) Taking into account the need to link pre-school institutions as closely as possible with community life, it is recommended that:

- *the hierarchization of objectives be done in accordance with the learning needs of each environment and that the priority accorded to any one objective should not prejudice the pursuit of any other;*
- *pre-school infrastructure should be in keeping with*

the environment in order not to constitute a barrier to the child's development;

- *the same type of activities be suggested for pre-school institutions with the materials and means used for the conduct of these activities varying according to the environment;*
- *diversification of means, materials, and methods should have their temporal as well as their spatial dimensions in such a way as to keep abreast with the evolution of the environment;*
- *in their town planning activities municipal authorities should take into account the need to offer the child the minimum of space needed for his growth and welfare.*

(4) Based on the fact that pre-school education should be by team work, the Seminar drew a distinction between the contributions to be made by parents, by the home, as well as by the pre-school personnel. Ways of ensuring collaboration between the three agencies were also suggested.

The Role of the Home and the Community

(i) To help with the introduction and maintenance of cultural aspects of local life into the pre-school programme;

(ii) to see that the child's education is ensured by men and women;

(iii) help with the installation, the maintenance, and the running of school infrastructures;

(iv) contribute to the provision and production of learning-teaching materials.

Role of the Teacher

(i) To ensure the protection as well as the security of the child by care and preventive action relating to health;

(ii) *to organize the activities needed to foster the all-round development of the child (e.g. play, planning, learning activities, selection and production of materials, etc.);*

(iii) *to establish a close relationship between the school and the community in order to sensitize parents to the importance of pre-school education and to involve them in the work and life of the pre-school institution;*

(iv) *to make efforts to understand his environment and to be able to keep the team of pre-school education going.*

(5) Collaboration between the Pre-school Institution and the Community: The Seminar wanted it emphasized that PARENTS SHOULD NOT TRANSFER TO THE SCHOOL THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES TO THEIR CHILDREN.

In view of this the following forms of collaboration between the pre-school institution and the community were recommended:

- *the organization of regular meetings for the exchange of views;*
- *holding informal meetings at the beginning and at the end of a child's pre-school education;*
- *participation of parents in activities of the school institution;*
- *organization of common home-school activities (e.g. ceremonies, exhibitions, etc.).*

(6) Resources for the production of materials: The Seminar recommended that:

- *children should be encouraged to make their own toys;*
- *local materials (natural materials and waste products) should be used as much as possible;*
- *efforts should be made to get technical institutions involved in the manufacture of toys;*

- *efforts should also be made to involve all qualified persons (artisans, school teachers and other educational personnel, etc.) with the making of toys and other educational materials;*
- *African governments should take more interest in the manufacture of toys and in publishing;*
- *Parents and teachers should stop all acts of discrimination between boys' toys and girls' toys.*

5. SEMINAR ON SERVICES FOR THE YOUNG CHILD, Port Louis, Mauritius, 10 to 17 November 1979 (Unicef)

(i) The children of this age group are particularly vulnerable to infectious diseases, malnutrition and accidents which impair their physical, mental and social development.

One objective of pre-school care and education is to help prevent such impairments. In this regard pre-school care and education cannot be divorced from the nutritional and environmental conditions to which the young child is subjected. An integrated approach is therefore required in providing services which will correspond to the children's needs. Equal attention must be given to nutrition, immunization against common diseases and to health care and education.

(ii) *The effective delivery of services for the young child, especially to the disadvantaged groups, requires a national policy and a variety of channels of communication ranging from formal to informal. This entails participation of different ministries. Correspondingly at community level it involves child-care workers, mothers, grandparents and the community at large.*

There is need for a co-ordinating mechanism for all sectors interested in young children, in order to bring about joint planning and implementation of services for the benefit of the child.

(iii) Existing centres and day-care facilities cannot cope with the increasing numbers of children who need attention.

There is need for more centres; Governments and NGOs, with assistance from international agencies, should assist in the planning and equipping of child-care centres. Agencies could provide planners and others with guidelines in order to avoid delays in securing funds.

(iv) The services provided to children in urban centres are superior to those provided to rural children. There is a need to redress this situation, and to search for strategies that would permit the use of a variety of institutions, delivery systems and also unconventional methods.

Equally important is the search for appropriate cost-reducing innovations, as well as the means to maximize the resources available in the country.

(v) Children in urban areas also need help. Town planners should make sure that they make special provision for children.

(vi) Governments are urged to provide training facilities and manpower for in-service and full-time training including training possibilities outside the countries, and also to provide trainers.

(vii) People other than specially trained workers must be identified, their abilities strengthened where necessary, and their knowledge, attitudes and special relevant skills put to use for the sake of the children of that community.

The importance of education for parents and other members of the family was stressed. Governments and UN Agencies, particularly UNICEF and Unesco, are urged to assist in the development and implementation of educational programmes (formal and non-formal) in child development for the community, using locally available resources and mechanisms. The mass media, newspapers, radio and TV and other community services should be used in order to enhance and strengthen the competence of all those dealing with children.

(viii) Child development should be emphasized in the curricula followed by medical students (doctors, nurses, midwives) teachers and social welfare trainees. It should also be included in the syllabi of primary and secondary schools.

It is suggested that Governments should call upon national commissions to review the existing syllabi, to incorporate basic information on child development and on the importance of pre-school services, in order to make the young members of society aware of the needs

of young children. This will necessitate re-orienting teachers to teach these subjects in schools.

(ix) There is limited knowledge, information and data available on the actual situation regarding the needs of the child, and the state of services and resources which are essential in planning services for the young child.

Adequate studies and research should be undertaken, and the findings made available to planners, teachers, parents and the community in order to convince Governments and the public of the urgency of the problems of the young child, and the need for improvement and development of programmes.

(x) *Machinery should be established to facilitate the exchange of information about experiences within the region.*

(xi) *Systematic monitoring and evaluation were considered important aspects in the development of services for the young child. As a matter of practical importance, there is need for simple methods of progress assessment in terms of child performance and wellbeing.*

The development of appropriate African day-care services necessarily implies an innovative approach which will stimulate the launching of pilot projects as a process for learning and evaluation.

6. INTERNATIONAL CONSULTATION ON PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION, Paris, 23 to 27 November 1981 (Unesco)

A. For Member States

(1) In discussing the pre-school area, Member States should consider the entire age range *from conception until the age at which the child normally begins basic, or primary formal education.*

(2) As services benefitting the pre-school age child involves not only the welfare of the unborn foetus and its mother, but also the developing toddler as well as the child who might benefit from a more formal education, an appropriate term to reflect this concept should be *EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION.*

(3) Considering that early childhood care and education is the right of *every child*, and not restricted to groups which may be perceived as being in the greatest need, *overall social development planning should include essential components of early childhood care and education for all citizens.*

(4) Early childhood care and education should contribute to the mutual enhancement and maintenance of the *cultural values of the society concerned.*

(5) Programmes of early childhood care and education *should be essentially child- and family-centred, enhancing and supporting the prime role of the family as the essential educative environment of the child.*

(6) *Recognizing that, in many countries, women still bear the main burden of child-care, programmes of support for women should be a significant strategy whereby resources are offered to their children.*

(7) *Recognizing that the full potential of the young child cannot be realized without the active interaction of his family and community, early childhood care and education programmes should operate at the local level, and focus essentially on the family -*

or, where absent, on the surrogate family. For this purpose, it is necessary to develop strategies for creating social networks within communities to enhance support and the exchange of information, and to create the essential framework for communal action.

(8) Local networks of parents, relatives, friends and relations should receive *the help of local "enablers", drawn from the community, who might, with very basic training, act as promoters of local initiatives for early childhood care and education programmes.*

(9) Involving such locally-based co-ordinators, an effort should be made *to develop flexible, indigenous and locally-controlled early childhood care and education programmes which could also meet the broader needs of the community.*

(10) In view of the fact that, in some instances, locally-produced activity materials prepared for families and the community are not being in current programmes or that, when produced, they do not reflect the direct experiences of local people, it should be ensured that

a) *where local activity materials already exist, they be accorded preference;*

b) *where they do not already exist, they should be drawn from the immediate local environment,* so as to have a direct relationship to the experience of children, parents and community; and

c) *programmes should be conducted, and materials written, in the language of the local community,* thus enhancing mother-tongue education and desirable local cultural values.

(11) *At the community level, programmes of early childhood care and education should contain, as an essential ingredient, parental education and support. Health education, literacy, skill learning, as well as more direct teaching about child development, should be fundamental components of such parent education.*

(12) *Recognizing the inherent possibilities for low-cost local programmes*, with minimum financial commitment, governments should not delay or discourage local initiatives in the field of early childhood care and education.

(13) Noting that Member States in general already allocated considerable resources to the development of primary school programmes and that, far from diverting their attention from this essential goal, *the development of early childhood care and education might substantially contribute to making first level education programmes more relevant*, and hence more cost-effective; and recognizing that research has pointed to the positive link between early childhood stimulation and subsequent school attainment, *early childhood programmes should be seen as a necessary component in the development of education systems.*

(14) In view of the need for effective training and development of relevant personnel to contribute to, and enhance, local developments of early childhood programmes, *emphasis should be placed on the need to produce personnel with a multi-disciplinary approach, able to act as co-ordinators and promoters of services to, and for, the community.*

(15) As the local-level programmes emphasized a person-to-person relationship within a wider social network, supported by local "enablers" drawn from the community, the *short, basic programmes of induction and continuing orientation must be provided for local personnel, at a level requiring only a basic educational background.*

(16) Priority should also be accorded to *retraining and re-orientation of existing professional and instructional staffs currently involved in early childhood care and education work. Such retraining should give special attention to inter-disciplinary aspects, as well as communication with families and communities.*

(17) Such personnel should have, in addition, an essential role in co-ordinating services, so that their training or retraining should reflect the variety of resources - among them of health, education, hygiene, housing, transport, community development - and the many agencies that impinge on the welfare of the child and its family. This implies the *need to develop, in*

conjunction with international agencies, specific training programmes focussed on local needs for multi-disciplinary or co-ordinating staff.

(18) *At the national level, government agencies with an interest and involvement in childhood and family affairs - such as health, education, social services, rural development and women's affairs, etc. - should also reflect this co-ordinated approach. They should examine to what extent such separate services can be co-ordinated at both national and regional levels to offer the most effective support for local initiatives.*

B. For Unesco and other International Agencies

(19) Unesco, together with other interested agencies, should, in the light of these recommendations, *appoint specific specialists in early childhood care and education to the respective regional offices, with responsibility to work with Member States in their areas. Such specialists, with adequate and appropriate support, should have as their role the task of stimulating the development of activity materials, training programmes, an inter-change of information throughout their region, and should - at the same time - be in a position both to encourage new developments and report on progress.*

(20) *Unesco should urge Member States to re-consider their methodology of gathering data so as not only to reflect the needs of differing age groups within the whole field of early childhood care and education, but to throw more light on informal provision being offered at the local community level.*

(21) Recognizing that in demanding information, including statistical data, which would more adequately reflect informal, locally-based provision, Member States were also seeking ways in which qualitative, as well as quantitative, data could be produced, and noting, at

the same time, that such data should not be presented purely in terms of traditional measures (numbers of institutions, enrolments, teachers, etc.), *Unesco, as a matter of urgency, should conduct discussions with Member States and with statistical and other experts to explore the possibilities of developing new and agreed measures and techniques of data-gathering.*

(22) As a stimulus to local initiatives, described earlier in the recommendations, *Unesco has an essential role in producing detailed case studies of successful initiatives in programmes of early childhood care and education.* Such studies, conducted at local level, should not only reflect the strategies employed, but should, in order that comparisons could be made with other schemes, provide details on the production of local materials, the essential support services employed, the degree to which parental and community co-ordination and co-operation had been achieved, and the costs involved.

(23) Consistent with the earlier recommendations to Member States to develop locally-based programmes, *a further essential role for Unesco in the medium-term is to provide fellowships and other facilities to enable national child care and education personnel to exchange information and to learn from other national programmes.*

(24) *Unesco, together with other international agencies involved in the field of early childhood care and education, should continue to sponsor and conduct international seminars and conferences over the whole field, not only to stimulate the exchange of information and new ideas, but review progress and offer guidance for further developments.*

(25) *Unesco should establish a series of "workshops" for early childhood personnel, to focus especially on the design and production of indigenous materials and activities, toys, books, posters, games and other resources.*

(26) In view of the fact that Unesco's publications and materials were not always accessible to those active in the field of early childhood care and education, and that expert support provided through international

agencies involved long delays and often resulted in inappropriate help being offered, *Unesco, together with Member States, should examine the machinery of its distribution of publications and also consider how it might both speed up, and make more sensitive, its response to demands for assistance.*

(27) *Unesco should strengthen its co-operation with those international organizations currently generating and disseminating research findings in the field of early childhood care and education,* bearing in mind the need to present such findings in a form which could be easily assimilated into local programmes. New knowledge should, so far as was possible, be available to communities in their local language, and - to the extent possible - generated at the local level. Support should also be given to the development of relevant research where little or none exists.

(28) In order to play a more dynamic role in the development of early childhood care and education programmes, particularly in the developing countries, *the Secretariat of Unesco should review, as a matter of urgency, to what extent the organization could both improve and co-ordinate its own present services that impinge on this wide field of activity,* and where, within its own organization, it would need to strengthen its resources to support the strategies recommended earlier.

(29) *Unesco, together with other inter-governmental and international funding agencies, should examine ways of improving collaboration and co-operation among themselves,* to harmonize their efforts and maximize increasingly hard-pressed resources.

(30) In the longer term, *Unesco has an essential role to play as a stimulating, enabling and supporting agency throughout the whole field of early childhood care and education;* and it should, therefore, *adopt this area of activity as a major focus of work in its future planning* to work more effectively with Member States to raise national and international consciousness about the needs of children and families throughout the world, and to transform those needs into dynamic programmes of support.

(31) Recognizing that these recommendations inevitably involve additional resources, especially in the provision of trained personnel, and being aware that such resources are both limited and under increasing pressure, *Unesco should review its budgetary allocations to the field of early childhood care and education, both in the medium-term and longer-term, so as to provide the necessary resources to implement the recommendations* outlined in this report.

7. NATIONAL SEMINAR ON PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION AND ITS DEVELOPMENT IN KENYA, Malindi, 13 to 19 June 1982 (Bernard van Leer Foundation)

(1) Through careful planning and co-ordination pre-schools be made to play a crucial role in the total development of the child by incorporating the following:

- *Providing activities to cater for a wide range of cognitive processes and skills and not just reading and writing.*
- *Feeding programmes to meet the nutritional needs of children.*
- *Using the pre-schools as immunisation centres to ensure a wider coverage for this age group.*
- *Acting as sources of identifying disabilities in children.*
- *Acting as centres for educating parents in health, nutritional and developmental matters.*

(2) In providing pre-school education opportunities, all these sponsoring agencies work on partnership basis. It was recommended that this practice should be encouraged and continued.

(3) The Ministry of Basic Education should however provide policy guidelines to all the sponsoring agencies in:

- *The basic requirements on school sites, building and furniture.*
- *The teaching and learning materials, and equipment.*

- *School management and administration including registration and fees structure.*

- *The scheme of service for teaching and non-teaching staff.*

- *The child-teacher ratio.*

(4) An inter-ministerial advisory committee on pre-school education should be established under the auspices of the Ministry of Basic Education.

(5) Women's organizations should be encouraged to make materials for use by pre-school children. This is particularly so during homecraft sessions.

(6) Local authorities should be encouraged and assisted in the task of providing for pre-school education.

(7) The current one-year training programme should be continued and expanded.

(8) A Pre-School Teachers' College be established so as to increase the output of trained teachers.

(9) Regarding the provision of in-service courses by the various agencies, it was recommended that:

- *Local authorities and other agencies employing pre-school teachers should be encouraged and supported to organise in-service courses for these teachers.*

- *Such in-service courses should be organised at Teacher Advisory Centres and at any other venues considered suitable by the organisers.*

- *The organisers of these courses should be encouraged to include parents and other members of the community in the programmes.*

- *A national in-service training programme for pre-school teachers should be established and should lead to the award of a teaching certificate to the successful candidates.*

(10) The Ministry of Basic Education should co-ordinate and give guidelines to all other agencies carrying out training.

(11) Kenyatta University College should mount a Bachelor of Education degree and other courses in early childhood

education for trainers, supervisors and other specialists.

(12) It was recommended that a National Early Childhood Education Centre be established.

(13) The following recommendations were made with regard to curriculum development:

- *The participatory model developed and used by the Pre-School Education Project should apply to all other training and curriculum development programmes.*
- *The available relevant teaching and learning materials should be identified, collected, collated and disseminated to all pre-schools.*
- *The Ministry of Basic Education should identify firms and institutions which can produce the prototype materials in large quantities, and should also provide guidelines for making these materials.*
- *The Ministry of Basic Education should co-ordinate the dissemination and distribution of pre-school materials.*

(14) To improve pre-school education programmes, it was recommended that:

- *A viable supervisory and advisory service should be created.*
- *The Ministry of Basic Education should co-ordinate the services of its inspectors and those of the supervisors employed by other agencies.*
- *The supervisors and trainers should be afforded adequate transport.*

(15) It was recommended that the Ministry of Basic Education should identify research priorities and co-ordinate research in pre-school education.

(16) In carrying out the functions outlined above and in order to implement the recommendations contained in the report, it was recommended that:

- *The Ministry of Basic Education should make adequate funds available for pre-school education.*
- *Where the funds are not adequate, the Ministry of Basic Education should seek assistance from donor*

agencies.

- *Agencies interested and involved in pre-school programmes should be encouraged to increase their financial contributions.*

ANNOTATED LIST OF NOTES COMMENTS... (CHILD, FAMILY, COMMUNITY) NEW SERIES: PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION 1-39

N.S. No.	Classification No.*	Title
1	1	Education of Children - 0 to 6 Years - in Developing Countries - A general description *(Parents' role to ensure balanced emotional and intellectual growth; child in the family; child and his parents; child and society; pre-school activities; role of adults; helping the child grow up; early childhood education)*
2	2	Child and his Development from Birth to Six Years Old - A resource document *(The first years of life; the major stages of development; perfecting of previous acquisitions; obstacles on the way; helping the harmonious development of the child; some examples of programmes for young children)*
3	3	Pre-School Education in Developing Countries - An expert's view. *(A decisive period; the role of pre-primary education; practical considerations)*
7	4	Books and Pre-school Learning *(Books to help adults involved in pre-school learning; do-it-yourself guides; books to help older children involved in bringing up younger siblings; books for future parents at secondary school level; books and/or printed material for the pre-school child; experience of industrialized countries; special considerations in preparing books/*

* As per Index & reading Guide - Notes, Comments...(Child, Family Community) New Series.

materials for pre-school children; books for primary school children; practical implications)

8 5 Some Approaches to Pre-school Education - A resource document
(Extent of current information; examples and pointers: Courtyard Play Centres (Anganwadi); day-care centres to help working mothers (Nigeria); day care of children during agricultural season to relieve mothers for productive work (Senegal), Mobile Creche - Day-care cum pre-school education in urban settings (India); Market Nursery for children of working mothers (Nigeria); Pre-school as base for basic services to children (Trinidad and Tobago); Day care integrated with basic services (North Africa); Integrating day-care and early childhood education (Finland); Pre-school as the initial stage for achieving social/educational objectives (Singapore); compensatory education to help the disadvantaged child (Malaysia); early stimulation in a clinical setting (Uruguay); mothers and neighbours in day-care and pre-school education (Colombia); pre-school education in villages organized by mothers (Sri Lanka); preparing parents for their role in early childhood education (Hungary); non-formal programmes for young children organized by regional and local government (Peru); mobilization of volunteer auxiliaries in pre-school education (Venezuela); involvement of local communities in pre-school education (Italy); community involvement in early childhood education (Australia); mobilizing local resources (Cameroon); a nationwide programme of state-sponsored day-care centres (The Socialist Republic of Viet-Nam); State initiatives in pre-school education (Malaysia); sub-

		regional co-operation in developing programmes for pre-school children (Eastern Africa).
9	6	How to run a Balwadi - Sample of a do-it-yourself guide book *(What is a Balwadi; what should the attitude of a Balwadi teacher be; starting a Balwadi; elaboration of activities of a Balwadi; maintenance of records, registers, etc.)*
10	7	Towards a National Early Childhood Policy - A discussion paper *(Need for a national early childhood policy; scope of a national early childhood policy; educational aspects of a national early childhood policy).*
13	8	Training Children to Care for Young Siblings - Exemplar learning materials *(Development of cognitive competencies and manipulative skills; language and motor development)*
14	9	University and College Students as Child Development Workers - Experience of M.S. University, Baroda, Gujarat, India *(Field work; child development worker; constraints; problems and pitfalls)*
21	10	Toys and Other Learning Materials for Early Childhood - Some suggestions *(Supervised and unsupervised play; furniture; buildings; items of equipment; the three R's)*
25	11	The Adaptation of Pre-school Education to the African Environment *(Pre-school education: For what purpose? Goals and objectives. How? By whom and with what?)*
33	12	Survival, Protection, Care and Preparation of the Young Child - A discussion paper *(Some essential pre-requisites of educational policy; why early childhood education?; Expert opinions; trends in the 1980s)*

36	13	Urban Poor and Child Development - A discussion paper *(Urban and rural poor; social and cultural milieu of slums; extra burden of the urban poor child; theoretical and policy implications)*
39	14	Training Programmes for Day-care Workers - A brief introduction to the training model of mobile creches in India *(Need and origin; setting up and evolution; pattern of training; trainer cadre; method/ process of training; training capacity; characteristics of the model)*
54	15	Tentativas de Soluction Relativas al Problema de la Educacion Pre-Escolar No Formal *(Pre-school project in the Dominican Republic: the problem; objectives; strategy; plan of action; research; technology; study programme; distance training; work with parents; education programmes and means of social communication; evaluation; development of elements and contents of curriculum; community participation; intersectoral co-ordination)*
57	16	Community Services Approach to Pre-school Services - Reflections of a group of East African educators *(The problems; existing services for pre-school children in Eastern Africa; priorities and alternatives; general observations and suggestions; setting targets for the future; community, parents and teachers - partners in pre-school education; monitoring and evaluation of pre-school projects)*
59	17	Cognitive Development in African Children - A resource document *(Stages of cognitive development; cultural influences; cognitive development in the African child; factors that facilitate cognitive development; specific examples of*

cognitive development in African children)

60 18 Co-operative Child Care within the Community - An innovative Colombian experiment concerning the pre-school age child
(Co-operative child homes; organizational process; administration and working; activities within the field of education; health and nutrition)

62 19 The Renaissance of Early Childhood Education - The American experience as a basis for comparison with today's conditions in developing countries
(Factors in renaissance of interest; task in hand)

73 20 The Child's First Learning Environment - The family and the home
(The family and the home: Points of departure; the family, the children and the home; conditions for growth)

77 21 The Learning Abilities of the Young Child - Arguments in favour of day-care pre-school education and parent education
(Wasted riches; the vastness of the potential of man, needs of the child from birth to six years; parent education; day-care and pre-school education)

84 22 Seen Through Children's Eyes - A pictorial account of some facets of child development
(A pictorial account of development from birth for parents and teachers)

86 23 Developing Koranic Schools to Meet the Educational Needs of the Young Child
(What is a koranic school? advantages and limitations of Koranic schools; How to improve and develop Koranic schools; some guidelines for starting and conducting Koranic schools)

88 24 Early Childhood Education and Pre-school Intervention - Experiences of early childhood

development and education project of Turkey
(Pre-school education in Turkey; early childhood development and education project in Turkey; First aspect: research and evaluation, Second aspect: conceptualizations and proposals, Third aspect: material development)

91 25 Nutrition Education of Pre-school Age Children - Suggestions to teachers and parents
(Nutrition Education - How can it be achieved? In the long run children must learn to eat well and consume local products; children must learn elementary hygiene rules; evaluating nutrition education; family participation)

94 26 Early Childhood Education Through Home-based Activities
(Why adapt a new approach? A suggested framework for home-based child development activities: Perceptual motor learning, visual discrimination, auditory discrimination, advantages of home-based activities)

95 27 Plan Curricular de la Educacion Pre-Escolar - Dominican Republic
(Continuation of N.S. 54 on pre-school project of Dominican Republic: Contents of pre-school programmes presented in detail in tables)

98 28 Children's Playthings and Play Materials - A resource document for training of personnel serving the young child
(Playthings and play materials: Selected features in the developed world)

99 29 The Changing Face of Early Childhood Care and Education Programmes in Latin America - A review of experiences and aids
(A brief overview; a shifting rationale: From welfare toward development, shifting scope and coverage, toward a combination of custodial

and developmental care, from recuperation toward preventive intervention, from certified professionals or parents to working with many care givers, from more expensive toward lower cost programmes)

101 30 Hong Kong's Policy on Care and Education of the Young Child - A sample of a newly evolved national policy
(The structure of pre-primary services; Standards of pre-primary care and education; Financial assistance for pre-primary services; Basic furniture and equipment for kindergartens; Summary of legislation which may be required)

106 31 Pre-school and Primary Education in China - A brief eye-witness account
(Pre-school education; Primary schools; Development of services)

107 32 International Dimensions of Early Childhood Education - A brief survey of current knowledge and some programmes in operation
(Current knowledge about child development; Some examples of programmes in operation; Conclusions)

109 33 Training Personnel for Early Childhood Education - An Israeli experience
(Study programme; Content of lecture series; Workshops; Content of shorter courses; Study visits; Final projects; Participants' findings and conclusions)

111 34 Primary Care for Pre-school Children through Home Day-care Centres - A Brazilian experience
(Project execution mechanisms; General method of operation; Cost implications; Conclusions)

122 35 Early Childhood Programmes in Latin America - A review of experiences and guidelines for action
(Emerging programmes in early childhood education; Why early childhood education

programmes? Review of the experiences of the 1970s; Some types of successful innovations)

123 36 Day Care Homes in Venezuela: Results of a Comprehensive Evaluation
(The programme: A neighbourhood service; The evaluation: Neighbourhood service scrutinized)

124 37 Common "Street" Games and Child Development - Suggestions for designers of early childhood educational activities
(Common street games: a natural resource; Special relevance: low-income countries; Relevance for "developed" countries; Collecting and grouping of games)

125 38 Pre-school Education and the World's Poorest: An Alternative View
(Is education only an optional concern? Short-term payoffs)

130 39 "Little Mothers Need Help" - A brief account of an Indian experiment in training older siblings for better child-minding
(The education cum recreation (ECR) programme with CHILD-TO-child approach; Guidelines based on experience; Conclusions and points to ponder)

REFERENCES TO NOTES, COMMENTS.. (CHILD, FAMILY, COMMUNITY) NEW SERIES

(1) N.S. 1, Education of Children - 0 to 6 Years - in Developing Countries, p 6

(2) N.S. 77, The Learning Abilities of the Young Child, p 10

(3) N.S. 33, Survival, Protection, Care and Preparation of the Young Child, p 1

(4) N.S. 1, Education of Children - 0 to 6 Years - in Developing Countries, p 1

(5) N.S. 77, The Learning Abilities of the Young Child, p 1 & 2

(6) N.S. 77, The Learning Abilities of the Young Child, p 3

(7) N.S. 10, Towards a National Early Childhood Policy, p 3

(8) N.S. 3, Pre-school Education in Developing Countries, p 1

(9) N.S. 36, Urban Poor and Child Development, p 2

(10) N.S. 88, Early Childhood Education and Pre-school Intervention, p 4

(11) N.S. 99, The Changing Face of Early Childhood Care and Education Programmes in Latin America, p 1

(12) N.S. 107, International Dimensions of Early Childhood Education, p 3

(13) N.S. 122, Early Childhood Programmes in Latin America, p 2

(14) N.S. 57, Community Service Approach to Pre-school Services, p 2

(15) N.S. 36, Urban Poor and Child Development, p 2

(16) N.S. 36, Urban Poor and Child Development, p 3

(17) N.S. 36, Urban Poor and Child Development, p 4

(18) N.S. 125, Pre-school Education and the World's Poorest: An Alternative View, p 7

(19) N.S. 125, Pre-school Education and the World's Poorest: An Alternative Vie', p 10

(20) N.S. 111, Primary Care for Pre-school Children through Home Day-care Centres - A Brazilian Experience, p 2

(21) N.S. 111, Primary Care for Pre-school Children through Home Day-care Centres - A Brazilian Experience, p 12